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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000753

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI BRIEFS CHARGE ON REFORM EFFORTS

REF: HARARE 736

Classified By: CDA Donald Petterson for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai told the Charge on September 18 that MDC commitment to the Global Political Agreement (GPA) has been met with nothing on the part of ZANU-PF but provocative actions. He continues to push for reforms, but is focused on constitutional reform which he hopes will lead to timely elections. President Robert Mugabe has agreed to a restructuring of the constitutional process, which Tsvangirai hopes will put it back on track, but further discussion on outstanding issues will await Mugabe's return from a 10-day trip to the UNGA and Venezuela. Tsvangirai faces the dilemma that supporters throughout Zimbabwe are impatient with GPA progress, but at the same time want to avoid any actions (such as presumably an MDC withdrawal from the government) that could result in a return to the violence and disruption of last year. Tsvangirai took the opportunity of the meeting to ask for renewed U.S. assistance to his office. END SUMMARY

12. (SBU) The Charge met with Tsvangirai on September 18 at Tsvangirai's home office to discuss recent political events.

ZANU-PF is Stalling

13. (C) Tsvangirai told the Charge that ZANU-PF was attempting to obstruct and delay the implementation of the GPA. His speech in Bulawayo on September 13 (Reftel) to celebrate the MDC's 10th anniversary was meant to draw a line. Tsvangirai lamented that the MDC had shown commitment to the coalition government, but had obtained nothing in return but provocative actions and inaction--hate speech in newspapers, prosecution of MDC MPs, a mostly stalled constitutional process, a stalled national healing process,

and the failure to appoint governors and Roy Bennett as deputy minister of agriculture.

14. (C) Tsvangirai said he followed-up on commitments in his Bulawayo speech with a meeting with Mugabe on September 13 (Reftel) in which he told Mugabe that until Mugabe reported progress on GPA issues, the GPA was out of his (Tsvangirai's) hands and that he would go to the people.

15. (C) Striking a more pessimistic note than in the past, Tsvangirai said the government "may" survive, but this depends on implementation of the GPA. He intimated that full implementation was not necessary, but did not elaborate on how much compliance would be satisfactory.

The Constitution

16. (C) Tsvangirai said he, Mugabe, Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara and the GPA negotiators (Tendai Biti and Elton Mangoma from MDC-T, Welshman Ncube and Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mashonga from MDC-M, and Nicolas Goche and Patrick Chinamasa from ZANU-PF) met on September 17 as a follow-up to the September 13 meeting. Tired of dealing with GPA issues piecemeal, Tsvangirai said he had hoped to have a discussion of all outstanding issues, but the meeting ended up focusing on the constitution.

17. (C) According to Tsvangirai, several agreements were

HARARE 00000753 002 OF 003

reached:

--The executive and civil society should have clear roles in the constitutional process. Accordingly, the three principals and the three chairs of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution (Douglas Mwanzora of MDC-T, David Coltart of MDC-M, and Paul Mwangana of ZANU-PF) will oversee the process. Operational oversight will be exercised by a committee consisting of the three Select Committee Chairs, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs (Eric Matinenga), and the civil society chairs of the All-Stakeholders Conference (Hope Sadza and P.M. Makarane). Additionally, a secretariat will be established. (NOTE: Tsvangirai commented that funding will be necessary for the secretariat and for the process in general; noting that UNDP had made a contribution, he asked that the U.S. consider funding assistance. END NOTE.)

--The Kariba Draft will not be tabled as a draft constitution but will serve as a reference point.

--There should be flexibility in timelines to accommodate the overall timeline of a draft constitution within 18 months of the inception of the new government as specified in the GPA. For example, the GPA calls for a 90-day period for public outreach and input. This is now 30 days behind schedule. Tsvangirai suggested that since the constitution has been a topic of discussion for the last 10 years, the 90-day period could be shortened.

Outstanding Issues

18. (C) Tsvangirai noted that it was impossible to make progress on outstanding issues without the direct intervention of Mugabe. The principals agreed, therefore, at the September 17 meeting to postpone discussion on outstanding issues until after Mugabe's return from a 10 day trip, beginning on September 19, to Venezuela and the UNGA.

19. (C) The Charge pushed Tsvangirai as to how he could have any confidence that, in light of the experience with the GPA and coalition government, Mugabe would implement the GPA.

Tsvangirai acknowledged that there was no reason to believe ZANU-PF would change. Nevertheless, it was necessary to continue pushing without undermining the ultimate objective of elections. With regard to elections, Tsvangirai commented that although some in ZANU-PF wanted to delay elections until 2013, he was committed to elections as soon as a referendum on the constitution had taken place.

¶10. (C) Tsvangirai admitted he did not know what the MDC would do if Mugabe continued to fail to implement the GPA--this was hypothetical. Mugabe did not want the government to collapse, in his opinion, but wanted it to continue on his terms. Also, Mugabe was faced with the difficulty of managing his party before its Congress in December.

¶11. (C) The next step for the MDC in the event of continued ZANU-PF intransigence would be the SADC Troika, according to Tsvangirai. He added that he had little faith in SADC.

¶12. (C) Tsvangirai implied that withdrawal from the government was an option if Mugabe continued to stonewall. But he underscored that while many MDC supporters around the country were frustrated with Mugabe's failure to implement the GPA and the lack of progress of the government, they were loathe to return to the violence and disruption of last year that they were afraid could result from an MDC withdrawal from government.

HARARE 00000753 003 OF 003

A Note on By-Elections

¶13. (C) Tsvangirai observed that without an Electoral Commission, it would be impossible to have by-elections in the 15 or so constituencies that are now vacant. When to hold elections might be an issue the principals would have to deal with. (COMMENT: None of the three parties appears eager to have by-elections. ZANU-PF and MDC-M know they would fare poorly. MDC may be concerned that violence could return at a time when people are just getting back to their lives. END COMMENT.)

Assistance for the PM's office

¶14. (C) With six months of U.S. assistance to the Office of the Prime Minister concluding, Tsvangirai asked if we would consider extending assistance for a year, or at the least for six months. He commented that when assistance began, there was an expectation of more progress in the government and with the economy that would have obviated further need.

COMMENT

¶15. (C) Tsvangirai is in a difficult position. He is facing pressure from his party to be more assertive in order to get Mugabe to implement the GPA. But his only real leverage is to leave the government. This may not be a viable option, at least in the short term. Many MDC supporters are enjoying relative tranquility--and some economic improvement--after a turbulent couple of years and are afraid of the possible consequences of a dissolution of the government. For now, we expect Tsvangirai to continue to push, with only minimal concessions by Mugabe. If there is more meaningful compliance with the GPA, it will likely come after the ZANU-PF Congress in December.
PETERSON